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Robert S. McNamara



Dear Bill

Enclosed is a copy of a speech I made recently in South Africa. The moral and geopolitical implications of the apartheid problem are, of course, immense, and I thought you might find these comments of interest.

Robert S. McNamara

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THE ROAD AHEAD

AN ADDRESS BY

ROBERT S. McNAMARA

TO THE

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

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I. INTRODUCTION^a

I am deeply honored and grateful to have been invited to deliver the Chancellor's Lecture at this extraordinary and courageous university.

I am honored not only because it puts me in the distinguished company of the former lecturers in this triennial series, but also because the event itself commemorates so important a principle—academic freedom—and so steadfast a stand on the part of this university against the unwarranted limitation of its legitimate autonomy, including insistence on its right to select students and faculty without interference by government.

And I am grateful because it affords me the opportunity to discuss candidly and freely with you—from this unique podium—some of the mutual concerns that we in the United States share with many in South Africa over the current trend of events here.

A beloved American poet, Robert Frost, wrote:

Two roads diverged in a wood,
And I, I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

What I want to say to you—and through this occasion to my own countrymen in America—is that I believe that South Africa today does face two roads to the future, and that your choice of the road to follow will "make all the difference" both to your nation and to mine. I want to take a look down those two roads this evening and suggest that both you and we choose the one "less travelled by."

^aI am indebted to the former British Prime Minister, Mr. Edward Heath, who spoke on the subject of South Africa at the Opening Session of the International Political Prospects Conference, Johannesburg, August 31, 1981; to Mr. Alan Pifer, President of the Carnegie Corporation, who delivered the Commemoration Day Lecture at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, October 14, 1981; and to The Study Commission on U.S. Policy Towards Southern Africa, whose report, sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation, was published in May 1981, for material which I have used in this statement.

Now, you may well wonder why I single out South Africa's apartheid for special attention in a world in which arbitrary rule, political assassinations, kidnappings, jailings of dissidents, and torture are commonplace. And you may well ask why I feel it appropriate for a United States citizen to speak to you about what many South Africans consider purely an internal matter.

Henry Kissinger, as Secretary of State, answered that question in part in a speech he made in Zambia in 1976. He said: "The world community's concern with South Africa is not merely that racial discrimination exists there. What is unique is the extent to which racial discrimination has been institutionalized, enshrined in law, and made all pervasive."

But beyond that very valid point, there is—in my view—the sobering fact that South Africa's racial policies warrant international concern because I believe that unless they are fundamentally redesigned they will eventually lead to a catastrophic racial conflict that will have serious ramifications throughout the Western world, and most especially in the United States.

Frustration is clearly festering among young blacks^a within South Africa. Many have already left the country to join liberation movements. Many more will do so in the future. And if a rising tide of violence engulfs both whites and blacks in South Africa—and, particularly if the Soviet Union chooses to help wage a war of liberation directly, or by proxy, against the white regime—then the United States will be confronted with a very dangerous set of dilemmas in trying to decide how to react.

Many Americans—both blacks and whites—will have intense personal feelings about the issues. Strong conflicting pressures to support one side or the other will emerge. The resulting debate could quickly mobilize African political and economic pressures against America. It could divide the United States from its European allies. And it surely would lead to bitter and divisive debate within the United States itself.

^aUnless otherwise indicated, the word blacks in this text refers to Asians, Colored, and black Africans living in South Africa.

To put it bluntly, if South Africa fails to deal justly and effectively with its own internal racial problem, that failure will not only result in immense damage to your society, but it will impose heavy economic, military, and political penalties on other societies in the Western world as well, and particularly on the United States.

Bear in mind that I speak as a white American. Bear in mind that I speak to you as one who has witnessed the staggering costs my own country has had to pay because of its century of delay in moving to end our shameful discrimination toward black Americans. That tragic delay was without question the most serious mistake in our entire history, and the hard truth is that all Americans will continue to pay a heavy price for it for decades to come.

What, then, I would like to do this evening is:

- Describe apartheid as an outsider sees it today;
- Examine the Government's programs for dealing with it in the future;
- Express a judgment on the internal and external reaction to that program, and
- Consider the actions, internally and externally, which might be taken to lead to a different outcome.

II. THE SITUATION TODAY

First, then, let me describe how an outsider sees the situation today: what we in the United States believe to be the major elements of the apartheid policy, and what we understand are the Government's plans for the future.

The Race Classification Laws, the Influx Control Laws, the Land Laws, the Group Areas Acts, and the Homelands Policy are the building blocks from which the present apparatus of apartheid has been constructed.

Apartheid, then, rests on the following foundations:

- The Population Registration Act of 1950 requires that every person be classified as White, Colored, Asian, or Black African. A person's political, civil, economic, and social rights hinge on this classification.

- The "Homelands", including those designated as independent, comprise 13% of South Africa's geographical region. The land in these areas is poor, and the economies stagnant. And yet all black Africans—comprising 70% of the population of the country—are assigned to these areas as citizens, no matter where they may actually live. Thus, out of a total of 21 million black Africans, 11 million are resident in the Homelands; and 10 million, including perhaps two million males who are separated from their families, are "temporary residents" in the "white areas."

- The Land Laws prohibit black Africans both from owning land outside the Homelands, and except in rare instances, from living outside the Homelands unless employed by whites.

- The Influx Control Laws regulate the movement of blacks throughout South Africa by requiring that every black over the age of 16 be fingerprinted and carry a "Pass" Book containing the individual's identity card and employment record. A policeman may ask a black to produce his "Pass" at any time, and failure to do so is a criminal offense.

The apartheid laws are enforced by powers granted under the Internal Security Act of 1962 which consolidates the provisions of earlier legislation. The Act—through restraints on the press, restrictions of civil liberties, and limitations on political activity—enables the Government, without recourse to the Courts, to silence anyone who poses a challenge to the regime.

The Security Laws were strengthened during the 1960's and 1970's by statutes enacting a series of tough pre-trial and preventive-detention measures. These laws place both whites and blacks in jeopardy of losing their personal freedom if they speak out against injustice.

In addition to detention, there is the penalty of "banning." A banned person loses the opportunity for normal employment, and for communication with friends and associates. Banning procedures are totally arbitrary.

This structure of restrictive laws, and arbitrary enforcement power, supports the following basic elements of the apartheid policy.

- Denial of political rights:

Blacks are excluded from all significant forms of participation in South Africa's political system. They have no authorized voice; they are not even allowed to join political parties containing white members. Legislative power is vested in the 177 member parliament. The House of Assembly is chosen by whites (who total 4.8 million out of a population of 29 million) and restricted to whites. The executive power is held by the Prime Minister, the leader of the majority party of the parliament. Parliament is supreme and no court may invalidate its acts.

- Segregation in the routine of daily life:

Segregation in lavatories, restaurants, railway cars, buses, swimming pools, and other public facilities is the rule. There is no legal obligation to provide comparable separate facilities for all racial groups. Although there has been some relaxation of segregation in recent years, "separate and unequal" treatment remains both legally accepted and widely practiced.

- Gross economic disparities between whites and blacks:

The Homelands contain more than one-third of South Africa's population, but produce less than 5% of the country's goods and services. The apartheid laws limiting the residence and movement of Africans have led to the development of a migrant labor system in which some 60% of the men employed in the modern urban sector are migrants. They live in squalid, overcrowded barracks, without permanent resident rights for themselves or even temporary residence rights for their wives and children.

Race very largely determines the job a person holds. In 1977, fewer than 1 of every 100 unskilled workers was white, and fewer than 1 of every 200 company managers was black. There has been a conscious effort over the years to channel black labor to where it will benefit the whites, and to raise barriers against it where it seems to compete with

whites. The gap between white and black incomes is enormous: income per capita for whites is 10 to 12 times that of blacks.

- Discrimination in the distribution of social services:

The education available to blacks is vastly inferior to that for whites. In 1981 the pupil teacher ratio for black Africans was more than twice that for whites. The preparation of black teachers is generally poor. There is a shortage of 8,000 classrooms in black areas. In 1979 the Government spent \$940 on the education of each white child, versus \$90 on each black African child. Although black Africans outnumber whites 4½ to 1 in South Africa, white University graduates outnumbered black Africans 75 to 1.

Housing policy maintains the separation of the races, and preserves the existing structure of inequality. More than in any other country in the world, where one lives is determined by law. The Native Urban Areas Act of 1948 established compulsory residence for urban blacks in separate areas ("locations") on the outer edge of white areas, and regulated the entry of blacks into the cities. A housing shortage of crisis proportions exists—there is a shortage of 206,000 homes for blacks, almost none for whites. The average home in Soweto has 520 square feet; only 6% have baths, 13% indoor toilets, and 20% electricity. The housing shortage has led to squatter settlements of tin shanties without heat, sewerage, or electricity in which a population of over 1 million dwell.

The health status of black South Africans is generally low. Infant mortality is high (ten times that of white infants) and white life expectancy is 30% greater than that of blacks. There is one doctor to every 600 whites (about equal to the ratio in the U.S.), but only 1 doctor for every 40,000 blacks in the rural areas.

In summary, to us in the United States, apartheid is a system of racially biased laws which circumscribe nearly every facet of the daily lives of the South African blacks, limiting their economic liberties, and prohibiting any significant voice in the Government that controls their existence.

Is the Government acting to redress this situation?

It seems clear that the Government recognizes there is both internal and external criticism of its policy. It is seeking to give the impression that it is responding to such criticism by such actions as the following:

- A President's Council consisting of Whites, Coloreds, and Asians (but no black Africans) has been established as a multi-racial consultative body.
- The budget for black education was increased 26% in 1979 and 37% in 1980 (per capita expenditures for whites remain nearly 10 times greater than those for blacks) and plans have been announced to phase in compulsory primary education for blacks in selected areas.
- Budgeted expenditures for black housing have been increased.
- "Petty apartheid"—the whole apparatus of segregation in the routine of daily life—has been partially relaxed.
- Black labor unions have been recognized and most statutory job reservations have been abolished.

But despite such actions there has been little change in the basic structure of apartheid itself.

The weakness of the Government's program is twofold. The pace at which it addresses the pressing social and economic needs of the blacks is far too slow, and it fails to confront the issue of political participation. Nowhere does it begin to advance toward what former British Prime Minister Mr. Edward Heath has called the only ultimate solution: "The granting of full political rights to the non-white population of South Africa—a universal franchise at the national level."

III. ALTERNATIVE ROADS TO THE FUTURE

What will be the reaction to the Government's program?

Already one sees signs of a growing, though reluctant, acceptance among both South African blacks and outside observers that fundamental changes will come only through revolutionary violence:

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- The young blacks are increasingly chafing at inaction. An estimated 8,000 have left so far for military training abroad.
- Many older blacks, sharing the impatience of the young, are resigning themselves to the inevitability of sabotage and guerrilla warfare as necessary stimulants to change.
- The growing acceptance of violence as a tool of change has stimulated interest in radical ideologies, particularly Marxism.
- The concentrated opposition of Africa states is increasing South Africa's diplomatic and ideological isolation.
- The political and moral pressures on the West to further that isolation are increasing. President Shagari of Nigeria, for example, has said that Nigeria "would use any means" at its disposal, "including oil"—and Nigeria is the second largest supplier of crude oil to the United States—to persuade the U.S. to use its "powerful economic position to discourage and eventually destroy apartheid in South Africa."
- The pressure on the West is beginning to lead to expressions of support. The EEC, for example, has issued a statement which says it "condemns apartheid without reservation" as "an evil system which misstates the fundamental rights of the majority of the citizens of South Africa." It concludes by stating that the EEC countries "are convinced that the apartheid system must end".

But the words of South Africans themselves describe the situation far more eloquently than any words of mine. The Study Commission took testimony from scores of them. Here is a sample of what they said:

- From a black clerk who lives in Soweto:

"I live in a house with no electricity and with cold water from an outside tap. I see my wife in the Transkei but once or twice a year—she is refused permission to live in Johannesburg because she is a citizen of the Homelands. I was arrested for failing to carry my passbook. Although never charged with an offense, I was placed in solitary confinement. They wanted to know what I've been doing since the day I was born. They beat me. I don't forget that so easy."

- From a white Afrikaner, a small builder, who lives in Johannesburg:

"Who can be certain of what's going to happen. We live with this feeling of uncertainty. I feel that in Africa today no matter where you live, you've got to have some sort of security against the blacks. I have guns and I know how to use them."

- From a Malayan doctor practicing in a Colored township:

"The frustration is all over South Africa. And it's not just with the schooling and the educational standards. It's a frustration that goes right across the board. It's a question of knowing that when you've done your work, you've got to go back to those tenements. And even if you're in a job and have some ability, you know you are not going to rise above a certain level. Or if you do go beyond it you won't be paid what you should be paid. You know that your education is inferior. You know that when you go outside to get a bus, even in the pouring rain, you first have to check there is no sign that says the bus is for whites only. Basically it all boils down to that little piece of paper—your passbook—no matter what your standards or education. You are in a quagmire. You don't understand it and you just turn to violence—senseless violence. The black population is in a complete ferment. They are not going to take very much more of what has already been handed out to them."

- From one of the few black managers:

"The generation that comes after us will not be concerned with any kind of negotiation. It will go for a takeover, the sort of thing that happened in Zimbabwe. The moderate guys are being lured into the militant camp and the militants will tell you "Forget about negotiation." I don't think the attitudes of the average white man are changing. If anything his attitudes are hardening because he feels threatened, in a class sense, by blacks. No black person will tell you that there's been any real change in this country. The educational system hasn't changed. The opportunities within companies haven't changed. And the changes that have been made are not initiated by the black people themselves. How could they be, when black people aren't represented in Parliament."

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• From a white lawyer of British descent:

"There's an element of overkill on both sides. But I am afraid things are never going to be such that you can get out of that overkill situation. I think time is against us. While I am totally against guerrilla activities and terrorism and sabotage, I don't know if these people have any alternatives."

Because the South African Government continues to refuse to make any fundamental change in its racial policies, a violent explosion appears inevitable.

As a foreigner I was hesitant to make such a statement until I found that my views are shared by many others both within and outside your own country. Recently, for example, Andre Brink, one of the most influential of Afrikaner writers, speaking of the hope of the blacks for political rights, said:

"There was the sudden hope triggered by the liberation of Angola and Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Then the fall from grace of Vorster and the totally unexpected promises made by Prime Minister Botha, which of course haven't come to anything. We're at this stage of terrible frustration at the moment."

Brink was referring to speeches made by Botha in 1979 and 1980, which seemed to promise the dismantling of at least part of the structure of apartheid. But, because almost all the promised reforms have been abandoned, Brink sees a dark future. He writes:

"I tend by nature to go for a glimmering of optimism. For a decade I've taken the line that things are bad, but that there's a whole series of possible new developments just waiting to materialize. Now I'm slowly veering towards pessimism. Things have taken a turn for the worst, and last year was the worst I've ever known, even worse than 1976. There was a sort of turn in the historical current, a slow realization that nothing was going to happen. I've kept on believing that we could have a relatively peaceful change, but, the way things are now,

change can only come through an explosion. And that's terribly, terribly sad. What depresses me most of all is that if the worst comes to the worst there'll be this totally unnecessary human waste."

It is possible that the "explosion" when it occurs will be preceded or accompanied by Soviet penetration into the region—certainly both Mr. Edward Heath and the Study Commission on U.S. Policy Toward South Africa, consider that a probability rather than a possibility.

Mr. Heath, in a speech in this city in August of last year, pointed to the relentless geopolitical onslaught of the Soviet Union as one of the major forces shaping the international environment today. He drew attention to the recent tendency of Moscow to use proxy troops in areas far distant from the Soviet Union—for example, in Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and South Yemen—which enabled it to gain direct military leverage over conflicts to which it would never dare to commit forces of its own. The use of such proxy forces is underpinned by the increasing strength and geographical reach of the Soviet Union's own military power.

The Prime Minister stated that in his opinion the frustration of the non-white population in South Africa, born of the system of apartheid and fanned by the emergence of black majority rule elsewhere in Africa, constitutes one of the greatest opportunities for Soviet advance in the world today. He foresaw Russia developing a stranglehold on the region as a whole and denying to the West both the strategically important sea route around South Africa's Cape of Good Hope and her supplies of essential minerals.

The Study Commission in its Report wrote: "There are no easy solutions for South Africa. The choice is not between 'slow, peaceful change' and 'quick violent change' but between a slow, uneven, sporadically violent evolutionary process and a slow but much more violent, descent into civil war." Under today's conditions, it clearly viewed the latter as the more likely alternative.

¹In 1981, some 2,300 ships travelled the Cape route each month. They delivered 57% of the oil imported by Western Europe and 20% of that imported by the U.S. Seventy percent of the strategic raw materials used by NATO was also transported via the Cape.

And it believed, as did Mr. Heath, that the Soviet Union, directly or by proxy, would be fully engaged in such a civil war. The Commission recognized that today the blacks lack the means to mount any sustained military challenge to white authority:

- In terms of organization, tactics, and resources, the internal revolution is still at an embryonic stage;
- Physical repression by the government is severe, and can be increased further;
- The African Frontline States (Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) are not only too weak to provide training and logistical support for guerrilla forces operating within South Africa, but are too weak as well to resist retaliatory strikes against them—South Africa has the military power today to strike hundreds of miles beyond its borders.

But it is only a question of time before this military balance will be reversed.

The counter-insurgency struggle in Namibia has demonstrated how a relatively small number of guerrillas can tie up substantial military forces. As the economic strength of the Frontline States increases—and it will—they will gain the resources to support such guerrilla forces. When that occurs we can expect Soviet-Cuban-East German support of the Frontline States to expand to whatever level is required to protect them against retaliation by South Africa. Whatever escalation South Africa undertakes will be matched in scale and technology by the external Communist powers.

The ultimate outcome of such a conflict, unless it were to be influenced by the introduction of Western military power, hardly seems in doubt.

What is in doubt is precisely when the mounting racial frustration in South Africa will finally explode.

Earlier, my own assessment was that it would occur within the next three to five years. Recent discussions, however, with African leaders outside of South Africa have convinced me that this time frame is unlikely.

These men all agree with Mr. Brink. They state emphatically that peaceful evolutionary change at an acceptable pace is simply no longer possible in South Africa. They believe that violence on an ascending scale is now inevitable. Most believe that the final confrontation will come within five to ten years—none foresee the present system of white political domination extending beyond our lifetime.

They base this prediction on their assessment that today government security measures in South Africa are so repressive and ruthless as to prevent any black leader from raising his head; and that the Frontline States are so weak as to be unable to serve as external bases for economic and military support.

They feel that during the next five to 10 years three critical developments will occur:

- 1) The repression within South Africa will push the focus of the struggle outside its borders;
- 2) The Soviet Union will move in to support the Frontline States as guerrilla havens; and
- 3) The West will be unable to stand in strategic alliance with South Africa because to do so would be regarded as supporting a political system profoundly insulting to the basic human rights of the majority of its population, and hence, unacceptable to the peoples of the West.

In such a situation, the debate over the course to be followed by the West will increase the political tensions between Europe and the United States, and will lead to tensions and disunity between blacks and whites in the U.S.

If that is a description of where the "road" now being followed will lead, can one visualize a feasible alternative? I believe one can. Clearly a major element of such an alternative scenario is the program of economic reform supported by liberal South African business leaders.

These experienced executives have pointed out that it will be simply impossible for South Africa to achieve optimum rates of economic growth if the existing shortages of skilled personnel are allowed to persist into the future by the continuation of present policies—policies that deny most blacks access to the skills required, and deny those blacks possessing such skills the

opportunity to apply them. They go on to say that as the necessary economic reforms are put in place they will ultimately lead to political reforms as well.

But I see little evidence to support the conclusion that one set of reforms will automatically follow the other. There has obviously been economic advance for the blacks in South Africa over the past 30 years. But very little political progress has resulted from it. And that was the experience in the United States as well. The economic advance of blacks there, in the two decades prior to 1960, was not accompanied by proportionate political gains.

So although a program of economic reform is highly desirable in itself, and certainly deserving of broader support from both South African and international business leaders, I do not think that it is likely to bring the necessary political reforms fast enough.

I believe that the political issue must be confronted squarely. The South African Government's view that separate, but unequal development, is not inherently discriminatory; and that political participation by all persons, regardless of race or color, is totally unacceptable, must—I believe, change.

Now, of course, no outsider can dictate the form of an acceptable political alternative in South Africa. But it seems obvious that whatever the final formula may turn out to be, if it is to have any chance whatever of succeeding, it must be part of a negotiated settlement which will do two absolutely essential things:

- It must assure the blacks full participation in genuine political power.
- And it must protect the whites against a winner-take-all form of majority rule.

Some will object that rule by a black majority will lower the rate of economic and social advance in South Africa for blacks and whites alike. They point to the evidence that income per capita, literacy levels, and life expectancy are all higher, on average, for blacks in South Africa than in the nations of black Africa. They attribute the difference to the limited experience of blacks

with self-rule and they predict the same impact of such rule on South Africa.

They are undoubtedly correct.

The colonial powers no more equipped the blacks in their colonies for self-government than South Africa has trained hers. When Zambia became independent there were 100 college graduates and 1,000 high-school graduates in the entire country. And here in South Africa white university graduates outnumber blacks 75 to 1—in proportion to population: 300 to 1.

But the fact remains: for the blacks, social and economic advance is not an adequate substitute for political power.

Now what should U.S. policy be in the present situation? It should be based on the recognition that black nationalism in South Africa is a struggle whose eventual success can at most only be delayed—and at immense cost—but clearly not permanently denied. Indefinite delay will only guarantee that at some point black resentment will erupt into widespread violence, supported by bases and arms outside the country.

The U.S. must make it clear to South African whites that in the face of such violence the U.S. will not support them against the blacks.

But you may question, and some in my own country may question, that the U.S. attitude at the moment of crisis will be so firmly opposed to the policies of your government. Alan Pifer, in his Commemoration Day Lecture at this University, one year ago this month, touched on that issue. He pointed out:

"Whatever its seeming vicissitudes from one administration to another, official American policy toward South Africa is always subject ultimately to the prevailing convictions and attitudes toward racial equality and human rights that arise from our own national experience. This proposition leads to the view that American opposition to apartheid, however the latter may be dressed up or rationalized, will be a permanent factor in setting bounds to the nature of the relationship between our two societies".

Pifer went on to say that neither strategic interests nor economic concerns will outweigh these considerations:

"it is the racial and human rights aspects of South Africa which will dominate American thinking and which in the final analysis, will always be decisive" in determining our national policy.

And the fact is that opposition in the United States to your government's racial policies has been increasing throughout the past decade:

- Students and faculty on college and university campuses have protested against investment in American corporations doing business in South Africa.
- Religious organizations have appeared at annual shareholders' meetings to challenge corporate policies respecting South Africa.
- Legislation prohibiting new investment by American companies in South Africa, and requiring those that operate there to do so in accordance with American racial laws, has been introduced in the Congress.

So I entirely agree with Mr. Pifer. And I wish to repeat, as emphatically as I can, my belief that the United States will not support your government if it is confronted by military opposition from those who condemn apartheid—even if the withholding of U.S. support carries with it the risk that South Africa will fall within the Soviet sphere of influence.

I recognize that South Africa's official reaction to such a U.S. position might well be to terminate its exports of the four key minerals it now supplies the West: chromium, manganese, vanadium, and platinum. These materials are essential to Western industry and defense.

In anticipation of such retaliatory action by South Africa, the United States and the other Western nations should begin now to increase their stockpiles, to develop alternative sources of supply, and to prepare contingency plans to share such limited supplies as would be available. Such a program would minimize the impact on the West of South Africa's potential denial of these minerals.

IV. CONCLUSION

Let me, now, summarize and conclude the central points I have made this evening.

For more than two hundred years, from its beginnings as an independent sovereign nation, the United States has been committed by its own moral and philosophical tradition to supporting the efforts of those individuals and societies around the world that struggle to achieve political freedom and civil liberty.

As a white American myself I recognize that my country's inconsistencies in applying this tradition to American Indians, and to black Americans, have been shameful and inexcusable. But I am convinced that, if anything, these mistakes and failures have only strengthened the view of the overwhelming majority of Americans that racial injustice is socially destructive, morally unacceptable, and politically dangerous.

Now the truth is—as all of us in this audience are aware—that some of the most basic and fundamental forms of freedom and liberty continue to be denied to black Africans, and to other non-whites, here in South Africa.

And it is becoming increasingly clear that the blacks will at some point in the future move forcefully to overturn the apartheid policies of the white minority.

When that confrontation comes and violence erupts, it is probable that the Soviet Union and its satellites will provide both economic and military support to the blacks.

The United States, on the other hand, will almost certainly not find it morally or politically possible to support the white South Africans in their efforts to prevent the blacks from achieving fundamental reforms.

The ensuing conflict will divide and fragment world opinion, and it is entirely possible—if not probable—that much of Southern Africa will fall within the Soviet sphere of influence.

What, then, is to be done?

At the very minimum, all of us—the whites of South Africa, certainly and all those peoples of the West who hope for a just and reasonable resolution of South Africa's problems—ought to draw a lesson from contemporary events in areas as diverse and distant as the Falkland Islands, and the Middle East.

And that lesson is this.

It is better to defuse mounting tension beforehand than to let it explode into immeasurably more costly—and uncontrollable—conflict afterwards.

The final battle lines have not yet been drawn here in South Africa. Fundamental political change, without prolonged large-scale violence, is still possible.

But time is running short, and the options are running out.

And if what is left of the 1980's does not witness real movement towards sharing of political power—and the new Constitutional proposals do not appear to provide for such power sharing—then South Africa may, and I believe will, become as great a threat to the peace of the world in the 1990's as the Middle East is today.

The most underrated danger of human events is prolonged procrastination.

And the greatest tragedies of history have occurred not so much because of what was finally done, but because of what had earlier foolishly been left undone.

In the matter at hand, to fail to act wisely now is only to ensure having to act desperately later.

This potentially truly great African Republic does not need that, and surely does not want that.

Neither do its friends around the world.

In which number, both my country—and I personally—want to be counted.